

## **Seventh Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada**

**Mel Cappe**  
**Clerk of the Privy Council and**  
**Secretary to the Cabinet**

[Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data](#)

March 31, 2000

Dear Mr. Cappe:

I am pleased to receive your annual report on the Public Service of Canada.

Canada is well served by the Public Service of Canada. Canadians are fortunate to have federal public servants who deliver service of the highest quality, with dedication and commitment, in both official languages, at home and abroad.

The Government is committed to ensuring that this level of service continues, as it announced in the Speech from the Throne, through a "focus on the recruitment, retention and continuous learning of a skilled federal workforce." The Government also recognizes the need to build a more representative workforce, drawing upon the diversity of our great country.

After more than three decades in Parliament, I know first-hand the important role that the Public Service plays and I rely on its professional, non-partisan advice. I am confident that the Public Service of Canada will rise to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Chrétien

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Secretary to the Cabinet  
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March 31, 2000

Dear Prime Minister:

As Head of the Public Service, I am pleased to report on the state of the Public Service of Canada, pursuant to section 47.1 of the *Public Service Employment Act*.

Prime Minister, as the Government pointed out in last October's Speech from the Throne, we live in a changing world. Technology is altering every aspect of our lives. Knowledge and creativity are driving forces in our new economy. The issues facing our diverse society continue to grow in their complexity.

The Speech from the Throne set out an agenda for building a higher quality of life for all Canadians. And it reinforced the importance of—and the Government's commitment to—the federal public service, when it said:

To ensure that the Public Service of Canada remains a strong, representative, professional and non-partisan national institution that provides Canadians the highest quality service into the 21st century, the Government will also focus on the recruitment, retention and continuous learning of a skilled federal workforce.

Prime Minister, the challenges facing Canada and the Public Service are significant. But we are doing everything we can to meet them. Indeed, last year's first-ever, public service-wide survey of our employees shows that public servants feel the work they do is important and they are proud of it.

By continuing to focus on three pillars— service, policy and people—I am confident that we will continue to serve Canada and Canadians well for many generations to come.

## **Values – A Strong Foundation**

Our values are our strength. In accepting the calling of public service, we are asked to embrace a set of values which underpin our role in supporting ministers, who are custodians of the public interest.

The late Deputy Minister John Tait wrote eloquently about four sets of values:

- Democratic values mean we help ministers, under law and the Constitution, to serve the common good.
- Professional values reinforce our unwavering commitment to excellence, merit and, above all, to objective and impartial advice to the Government and service to Canadians.
- Ethical values, such as honesty and integrity, guide our actions and decisions and ensure that public servants put the common good ahead of personal interest or advantage.
- People values mean we respect our colleagues' needs and aspirations as well as those of the citizens we serve. We draw strength and creativity from the diversity of Canadian society.

As public servants, we rely on all four sets of values to inform and guide us as we serve clients and, through our accountability to ministers, as we serve the broader public interest. We must keep in mind that it is our duty to serve the public well, but it is also our duty to serve the higher public good. We must make su

that these values spring to life in all our decisions and actions.

This challenge may be the greatest for those working on the front lines. But it is equally valid for those working behind the scenes. We need to focus on our values whether offering policy advice to ministers, delivering or designing programs and services, consulting Canadians, or working in such areas as human resources, administration, finance, legal and regulatory affairs, communications, informatics, security and defence, research, scientific and operational functions, and trades and technical services.

We must continually ensure that decision-making authority is located at the right level to achieve results. We must balance any extension of authority with a strong commitment to modern comptrollership— clear accountabilities, performance assessment, effective control of public resources, sound risk management and open reporting of results. We must also strive for continuous improvement. Public servants must look for ways to do things better— in the programs and services we deliver to Canadians and in the policy advice we offer to ministers.

## **Modernizing Service Delivery**

Prime Minister, Canadians rightfully expect the Public Service to respond to 21st century needs with 21st century service.

Modernizing service delivery has been a priority for my predecessors in their role as Head of the Public Service. This continues to be a major priority for me, with a particular focus on better serving Canadians in our increasingly digital world.

The Government of Canada is the country's largest provider of information and services. Canadians value this information and these services— as consumers concerned about product safety, as learners searching for educational opportunities, as vacationers looking for information on parks and cultural events, as entrepreneurs exploring market opportunities, as volunteers looking to build community organizations, and as citizens of the world keen to learn about Canada's contribution on the international stage.

We live in an information age, and we are building a more knowledge-based economy and society. In a vastly more crowded information environment and in a world where time is at a premium, citizens need better access to government information and services. And citizens need different ways to reach the government — in person, by mail, over the telephone, or through the Internet.

In the Speech from the Throne, the Government set out its goal of becoming a "model user of information technology and the Internet" and its goal that, by 2004, it would "be known around the world as the government most connected to its citizens, with Canadians able to access all government information and services on-line at the time and place of their choosing."

The Public Service of Canada is working to meet these goals and respond to the needs of Canadians. One way is through Service Canada, a new, integrated service delivery network which gives citizens one-stop access to information on more than 1,000 federal programs and services. People can obtain one-stop service in person at Service Canada accesscentres, by phoning 1-800-O-Canada, or through the Canada site on the Internet.

Service Canada is also the most visible part of a much larger and more profound revolution that is transforming the way we do business and how we serve Canadians and Canada. This revolution is

stimulating, and assisting, in the development of "electronic government" (e-government).

E-government is more than simply putting information and services on-line. It means using new technologies, including the Internet, to improve administration of programs and services. It involves people and the sharing of ideas, know-how and expertise in a secure environment that protects the privacy of Canadians.

E-government also requires collaboration across departments. As we put programs and services on-line, we must maximize their value by grouping them around citizens' needs and priorities. E-government means building partnerships with other levels of government and with private and not-for-profit sectors. We must mutually align our programs and services, whenever this makes sense. Above all, e-government is about enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of government for citizens.

How are we proceeding? We have a strategy based on targets and partnerships. It focuses on getting secure infrastructure in place and on making sound investments. Our first commitment is that, by December 2000, all departments will have an on-line presence, with information on programs and services and with key forms.

## **Strengthening Our Policy Capacity**

Just as we are modernizing service delivery, so too are we continuing to strengthen our policy capacity. In light of the many challenges and opportunities facing Canada today, a strong policy capacity is essential, and so is a strong policy community. We are taking steps to ensure that the Public Service of Canada can continue to provide ministers with professional, non-partisan, and analysis-based policy advice.

Since so many issues are interconnected and involve several government departments, we have created working groups which bring together the expertise and perspectives of many departments. We have also started grouping policy proposals for the Government's consideration by theme.

Responsibility for many of the issues affecting our quality of life does not lie with one level of government or organization alone. That is why we are collaborating with a broad range of external partners in developing policy initiatives. These partners include provincial and municipal governments, research and academic institutions, international organizations, voluntary and stakeholder organizations and individual citizens. This collaborative approach is reflected in a range of federal policy issues, including biotechnology, climate change, and international trade.

Continuing to strengthen our long-term policy research capacity is another priority. A strong, diverse policy community is able to anticipate and plan for the future. It looks beyond today to advise the government how and where it can make a difference tomorrow.

The Policy Research Initiative, launched in 1996 and developing well since then, is our principal tool for doing this. Through this initiative, we are identifying and assessing the long-term social, economic and international trends that will impact on the quality of life of individual Canadians. We are also beginning to significantly expand our links with the broader policy research community outside the Public Service— at regional, national and international levels.

## **Focusing on Our People**

Prime Minister, our efforts to modernize service delivery and strengthen our policy capacity hinge on one thing — our people at every level, in every department and agency, in local offices, in regions and headquarters, and those representing Canada abroad.

We need to create an environment where all public servants are excited about their work and look forward each day to serving Canadians. We need to attract and retain Canada's best and brightest minds to ensure the best policy advice. We must motivate an entire generation of promising new graduates to consider a career in the Public Service. We must provide all employees with the opportunities and the support they need to develop and learn. We must become more of a learning organization, focused on continuous improvement. Canadians and parliamentarians deserve nothing less.

In recent years, public servants have shown their unwavering commitment to renew the Public Service of Canada — visible in the many positive changes put in place under *La Relève*. Much has been done and much more awaits us. We are building on this work as we respond to the Government's commitment to the Public Service in the Speech from the Throne.

In each of three areas — recruitment, workplace well-being, and learning and development — a recently created committee of deputy ministers is drawing up plans to ensure that progress continues over the next five years. Diversity is an overarching priority for all three committees. The Public Service must reflect and embrace different backgrounds, cultures, experiences, interests and styles.

We value diversity because we believe that when we take account of diverse views as we develop policies, and design and deliver services and programs, we get better outcomes. A more diverse Public Service sets an example for others, protects the merit system, creates a greater sense of community, and provides an exciting career option for every Canadian.

### ***Workplace Well-Being and Retention***

Central to our strategy is workplace well-being. We want to be able to retain the valued people that we have in place as well as those we seek to attract.

As I mentioned earlier, last year's landmark survey of federal public servants spoke volumes about the commitment and dedication of our employees to public service, despite many years of difficulties. Some 96 percent of public servants who responded to the survey feel the work they do is important. Some 87 percent are proud of their unit's work, 88 percent said they like their jobs, and 75 percent find their department or agency is a good place to work.

Survey respondents also zeroed in on areas that need action: harassment, discrimination, career development, fairness in the promotional process, communications, and workload. In response, supervisors and employees are seeking ways of acting to immediately improve the workplace; and deputy ministers and agency heads are addressing issues in their own organizations. As well, the deputy minister committee on workplace well-being is developing a corporate action plan to address these priority issues. The plan will be made public this fall.

In the meantime, we are taking immediate action, particularly to address the serious issues of harassment and discrimination. As well as talking with bargaining agents about these issues, we are revising our government-wide policy on harassment.

Addressing the workload issue is a particular challenge. There is no single solution. Each employee and

manager must take a hard look at how we do our work— to evaluate what we are capable of delivering and what we can do well. Deputy ministers, collectively and individually, must open a dialogue to ensure we are focussing on the right things. And central agencies must provide managers with the tools they need to work efficiently and effectively and ensure the integrity of programs and services.

We continue to modernize our work processes and management practices. We are placing a priority on integrating and streamlining our planning and reporting systems, so that we can better focus on outcomes. At the same time, we must adhere to sound financial management and administrative practices, show fairness in human resources management and, above all, ensure accountability in all that we do.

## ***Recruitment***

Like many institutions, we are focusing on recruitment to ensure that we are ready when the anticipated wave of retirements hits within the next five years. We need to have hired the people who represent the population we serve and who have the skills and experience we need. We also need to encourage experienced workers to stay on and lead the transition. Although we have undertaken some recruitment campaigns and employment equity programs, we know this is not enough.

The deputy minister committee on recruitment, which I chair, is developing an action plan which will mark a shift away from temporary, reactive recruitment toward a bolder, more proactive and strategic approach. It will focus on creating a workforce which is representative of the population we serve. The plan will emphasize recruiting and promoting members of target groups at all levels— women, visible minorities, disabled people and Aboriginal peoples. It will focus on youth, so we can capture the optimism and enthusiasm of this new generation.

Merit will remain central to our recruitment strategy and we must ensure that our definition of merit matches the realities of contemporary society. Merit must allow us to have better outcomes, encourage better performance, and value different talents. The Public Service Commission will continue to be the guardian of merit.

Also key to our approach is time. We need to start recruiting people now so that we have the time to groom and nurture skills and so new recruits have time to benefit from the depth of experience and knowledge of public servants across the country. Only in this way will we ensure a smooth transition in our workforce with no gaps in service. Prime Minister, this is in the interest of all Canadians.

## ***Learning and Development***

Learning and development must go hand in hand with recruitment and retention. They are the keys to preparing the Public Service to serve in this knowledge age. The most important investment a country can make is in its people— in their education, training, and lifelong learning. This includes the people of the Public Service.

Prime Minister, we are encouraging learning at all levels. We are placing a priority on developing and promoting people to ensure they have the breadth and depth of experience they need to serve well. And we are encouraging the development of leaders at all levels.

We are encouraging managers to provide their employees with opportunities for lifelong learning. They need to commit to learning plans for themselves and their employees, plans which comprise a balance of

actions, including training on the job, assignments, classroom training and participation in learning events. Managers also need to commit to passing on their knowledge to others for the benefit of the organization in the future. Support for middle managers in this time of transition in the Public Service is an important component of our approach to learning.

The Public Service as a whole must also become a learning organization. It is the best way to ensure the ongoing relevance of government to citizens. It is essential to create the comparative advantages that Canada will need in the global competition for talent and investment. It is critical to attracting and retaining knowledge workers.

A learning organization looks for best practices, celebrates its successes, and learns from its mistakes.

The deputy minister committee on learning and development is shaping an ambitious learning agenda for the Public Service of Canada. It is seeking the input of a broad cross-section of public service managers at all levels, in all departments and agencies, all functional communities, and all regions.

## **Conclusion**

Taken together, our efforts on recruitment, workplace well-being and retention, and learning and development will help us create exceptional workplaces, maintain an exceptional workforce and become a learning organization. This is what will make us an employer of choice.

We are recognizing and promoting the quality and nature of our work, whether in delivering services and programs or in providing sound policy advice. We are making meaningful improvements to our work environment through our response to the employee survey and other actions. We are removing unnecessary bureaucracy from our work processes with a focus on outcomes and accounting for results. We are developing leaders at all levels. By taking these steps, we will ensure that we can respond to the significant challenges we face, and that Canadians and Parliament continue to be well served by the Public Service of Canada.

We are creating a Public Service of Canada which is a modern and exciting place to work. Which is brimming with new ideas. Which is full of bright, talented people and leaders at all levels committed to serving their country and their fellow citizens with loyalty and dedication. Which recognizes the contribution of every employee at every level.

We are building a unique, national and bilingual institution which serves Canadians with pride and excellence. Which is representative of Canadian society. Which values and draws strength from being diverse.

We are creating a public service which is innovative, open to new ideas, and one which strives for continuous improvement. Which has a strong, strategic management culture focused on results and outcome. Which works in partnership with the broader public and other sectors. Which is relevant and essential to Canadians. Which is a worthwhile investment by Canadians.

As Head of the Public Service, it is my responsibility to set out the direction for the future, and my challenge is to motivate and inspire public servants in that direction.

The issues we face are complex, but I am not acting alone. Public servants at all levels, both on the front

line and behind the scene, are committed to serving Canada and Canadians well. Networks of leaders across the Public Service are showing innovation and action. You have a strong team of deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and agency heads who play important corporate roles.

As steward of this great national institution, it is my personal commitment— one which I take very seriously — to work with others to make this a reality. I look forward to making the Public Service of Canada the best it can be— a service which can build a higher quality of life for all Canadians, now and well into this new millennium.

Yours sincerely,

Mel  Capr

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## Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Canada. Privy Council Office

Seventh annual report to the Prime Minister on  
the Public Service of Canada

Annual.

1st (1991/92)-

Text in English and French on inverted pages.

Title on added t.p.: Septième rapport annuel  
au Premier ministre sur la fonction publique  
du Canada.

Issued also in electronic format on the Internet computer network.

At head of title of 1st and 2nd reports:

Public Service 2000.

ISSN 1193-7637

ISBN 0-662-64907-9

Cat. no. BT74-1/10-2000

CP-01/2000

1. Public Service 2000 (Canada)— Periodicals.
2. Civil service reform— Canada — Periodicals.
3. Civil service— Canada — Personnel management—  
Periodicals.

I. Title.

JL106 354.71'0005 C93-07047-4E

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<http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca>

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